

July 28, 2000

Mr. Priestler
Consumer Services
2401 Grace Street
Chicago, Illinois 60618

Dear Sir:

I am formally protesting the attached bill and hope, after I explain the situation, you will understand and help me with a complete and fair resolution.

Approximately 4 ½ years ago I called my local phone service (your company) at the request of AOL, my Internet provider. I spoke to a man and gave him a list of phone numbers. He told me they were all local numbers.

Now 4 ½ years later after a history of approximately \$50.00/month phone bills (copies of last 3 months enclosed) I get a \$731.00 phone bill! The problem was the Internet and a phone number - 630-870-1799 - that was authorized as local by the man at your company.

I would never have used a long distance (band C) number. I feel the information I was given was wrong and caused my problems with this bill. I spoke to a lady at Ameritech (Roseann) and she told me that she could not make an adjustment.

I hope that we can resolve this problem and an adjustment can be made. My case is based on wrong information I was given. I hope we can continue on our business like approach to this problem. I can only ask that you will give me a fair and impartial review.

I am enclosing all documents in regard to this case. I have been happy with the service and information provided to me by your company, but I understand that people make mistakes. I only wish the mistakes and wrong information would not impact my life, so please adjust my bill and understand my plight.

I have been a very good customer and paid all my bills to your company early and/or on time, and I am looking forward to continuing my relationship with Ameritech.

Respectfully,

Jerry C. Conlee
5729 Aubrey Terrace
Downers Grove, IL 60516
Phone: 630-852-4193

Subj: **SBC**
Date: 09/26/2000 6:29:56 PM Central Daylight Time
From: JConlee
To: LB2312@SBC.COM

Dear Ms. Butchart,

I want to thank you for repoding so quickley. I feel after our conversation, we can come to a fair settelment. The letter I e-mailed you , contains a proposed solution fair to sbc and my self. This settelment would provide for my paying all the minutes in the last two months(july and august)at the a-band rate not the c-band rate.

Thank you very much for your help and I await your reply.

jerry c. conlee

Subj: **Fwd: (no subject)**
Date: 10/11/2000 10:31:49 AM Central Daylight Time
From: JConlee
To: JConlee

File: M.WITACRE.doc (29184 bytes)
DL Time (49333 bps): < 1 minute

Forwarded Message:

Subj: **(no subject)**
Date: 09/26/2000 10:23:12 AM Central Daylight Time
From: JConlee
To: lb2312@sbc.com

Maam,

Thank you so very much for your concern and please help me so we can come to a settelment fair to both sbc and myself.....i can not believe how i was treated and my history shows that i am a good customer. Plus the fact never had a bill at such a amount. Plese help me!

Thank you very much
JERRY C. CONLEE

Mr. Ed E. Witacre Jr.
SBC
175 East Houston
San Antonio, Texas 78205

Dear Sir,

I have been an Ameritech customer for many years, since switching from Illinois Bell in fact, when at that time I could have chosen another phone company. I have always paid my bills early or on time and never had a problem with the local phone company until now.

My story reads as follows. I have been online with AOL for 3 ½ - 4 ½ years now. When I first got online during the dates above, I was told by AOL to check with Ameritech to verify that the phone numbers listed in the computer were all local numbers. I then did verify the numbers with Ameritech by giving the phone representative the list of numbers. I was told that they were all local, so I entered them in my computer. So for all those years everything went along fine - my monthly phone bills were approximately \$60.00 a month.

Then in mid-August of this year I received an Ameritech phone bill for \$731.00!!!!!!! (billing date of July 13th). After several phone calls, it was explained to me that one of the phone numbers put into my computer (Aurora - 630-870-1799) was in fact a "long distance" number instead of a local one. Because the other lines were busy, the computer started dialing this "long distance" number to access AOL and disregarded the rest of the numbers. Every time I went to use the computer, this long distance number (Aurora - 630-870-1799) - which I was told was local - came up every time.

I was shocked at the amount of this phone bill! I called Ameritech to see whether it was an error. When I called, I spoke to a lady named Roseann in the Chicago office who told me that I had 60 days to appeal the case. I was told to pay \$27.82 and further plead my case so I did that. First I talked to a collector and she agreed to give me 15% off the total bill. This left me with approximately \$682.00 to pay. I asked to speak to a supervisor, enters Roseann. She told me that the woman had no right to give me anything but now she (Roseann) was stuck to make an adjustment for the amount the girl said. So after I was told off in no uncertain terms, I pleaded and was told to appeal to a Mr. Priester in Chicago. Sir, after I wrote a letter and explained the problem and asked for an impartial hearing, I received an answering machine message that I was rejected. He gave me a phone number to call, so at my first available date, I called for him. The fellow was no longer in the office so I talked to a woman by the name of Andrea in the Chicago office. She told me that the phone number was not in the system 3-4 years ago so I must be mistaken and that I would have to pay the full amount! Finally I pled with her and asked if I could have a chance to explain the problem. The answer was no. I proceeded to plead and she said, after rejecting me in the off set, what did I have in mind? So I said how about if I paid \$500.00 - she switched and said fine, pay that figure. I said what

about next month's billing. I asked Ameritech at that time what my next month's bill was to date and was told that they could tell me that information. You see, Mr. Witacre, through no fault of my own, I caught the situation in mid-billing cycle. I assumed that the next bill would be large also. Andrea told me that she would not promise anything and gave me the impression that I would have to call back.

Now the story gets worse. I receive my bill - remember I was told just to pay \$500.00. The new bill reflected an additional amount. Now it was up to \$742.31. I called back. This lady was upset at the fact I called her and she raised her voice and was very aggressive (Andrea). So after I got off the phone with her I called another collections office and spoke to a woman who told me she could not help. She got her supervisor, Mr. White (Chicago). He told me that, according to everything he saw, I was just going to have to pay the full bill. Once again I felt like a guy trying to get over on the system. I then called the collections dept. to discuss the payment plan. I spoke to a lady who told me that I was going to have to pay \$182.00 up front or the phone would be shut off by Monday, August 28th. What happened to my appeals process - I was told I would have a chance for two appeals (told to me by Roseann). So now we have several employees and supervisors that are not taking into consideration any questions or concerns I as a customer have. They all seemed to be fixated about my paying the bill. I received no compassion or concern. I was abused and spoke to like a thief and I can not believe that a company like yours would allow this kind of action to take place. I have never been spoken to with such disrespect as a paying customer.

I did pay the complete bill (both July and August) on my Visa on August 22nd. My only hope is you. I was never given my right to a second appeal.

I always maintained the fact I that wanted to pay for my local phone calls (all of them) but not at the c-band rate but at the a-band rate. Sir, I could not have explained that to your employees. They were too busy trying to make me pay through threats, intimidation, yelling and abuse. Everyone I talked to during this mess was aggressive and combative. I hope that the decision that was rendered by Andrea had no ulterior motives. This was the only time I had any dealings with a high phone bill. My history shows my intent and the amount I always paid. I cannot believe that a responsive company would condone these kind of pressure tactics and abuse from its employees on its customers. There was one person I must admit that I spoke to - her name is TAMMY DONNA #2537 and she is from the Dayton, Ohio office. She didn't help me but she at least listened.

I am asking you to intervene on my behalf and "right a wrong". I feel I was treated like a thief and feel used and abused. I would have liked to pay the bill at an "A band rate" instead of a "C-band" rate. I now understand how senior citizens can get bulldozed, terrorized and scammed. I have never been treated this bad in my life. I always played by the rules and always paid my bills. This whole nightmare has put a hardship on my family and budget. Like the lady told me "NO ONE TOLD YOU TO GET ONLINE" per Andrea. Nice, isn't it, how your people can talk to your customers?

So sir, I am asking for your help, and this isn't a sign of selling your management team down the river, it is a sign of a professional one that understands the concerns of his customers. I would like to see an adjustment, either in the form of credits to following months bills, or a refund. I will again say I would pay the bill (which I already have) at a "A-band" rate, so sir, please help.

I know I have a choice to pursue other possible options, but I chose to come to you first. I know a man of your position would be fair and customer conscious. Other possible actions are that I must find out myself if the number in question was around 3-4 years ago. I must do this through the AOL Legal Dept. I also must contact the Illinois Citizens Utility Board for legal help and advice. Then I must go to the Illinois ICC Telecommunications Division. Also I will be in contact with AARP, and then I must and will go to the press, if necessary to explain how I was treated and how companies can harm and abuse people through bad customer relations.

These actions hopefully will not have to be taken in order to pursue my interest in fair treatment. This whole mess could have and should have been avoided, but the lack of professionalism and the rude attitude I came in contact with left me with no other options other than contacting you personally.

I hope that you will give me a fair review and credit me to reflect the billing of an "A-band" instead of a "C-band", and I would be most grateful for your favorable decision.

Thank you for your time in reviewing my plea. I anxiously await your response.

Respectfully,

Jerry Conlee
5729 Aubrey Terrace
Downers Grove, Illinois 60516
Account number 630-852-4193-9826